

In light of recent news that big insurance companies have been using group life insurance policies to obtain profits by duping the families of fallen soldiers, Congresswoman Debbie Halvorson (IL-11) introduced legislation today to ensure that insurance companies are open and honest about their policies on which so many military families rely.

"To read stories about big insurance companies profiteering at the expense of the parents or spouse of a fallen soldier is outrageous," said Halvorson. "As a member of a military family and stepmom to an Army special forces soldier seriously injured in Afghanistan, I have spoken with fellow military parents who have endured the burden of losing a loved one, and the last thing they need is to fight a big life insurance company. This legislation will ensure these policies are transparent and life insurance companies are held accountable."

The legislation introduced by Halvorson, titled the Securing America's Veterans Insurance Needs and Goals (SAVINGS) Act of 2010 (HR 5993), would mandate that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs require insurance companies that provide such group life coverage to provide financial counseling and disclosure information to family members of fallen soldiers. It would also require an annual report to Congress by the VA to ensure that insurance companies are being responsive to military families.

Since joining Congress, Halvorson has been a strong advocate for veteran's life insurance reform. Last year, she championed life insurance improvements for our veterans by sponsoring H.R. 2774, the Families of Veterans Financial Security Act. The measure, which sought to ease the burden of life insurance costs for totally disabled veterans, was included in legislation (HR 5993) that passed the House of Representatives.

As the only Member of Congress from Illinois on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, Halvorson has worked to provide a voice for Illinois veterans and fight on their behalf. Halvorson's first introduced piece of legislation, the Disabled Veterans' Health Care Fairness Act (HR 1335), which eliminates costly co-payments for disabled veterans was signed into law in the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (S 1963) in May of this year, along with the Wounded Warrior Caregiver Assistance Act (HR 2898), which provides services to military caregivers.